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New York

President: Mr. Essy . . . . . (Côte d'Ivoire)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Pak Gil Yon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 89 ***(continued)***

(e) Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Report of the Conference (A/CONF.167/9 and Corr.1 and Corr.2)

Report of the Secretary-General (A/49/425 and Add.1)

Notes by the Secretary-General transmitting the reports of the United Nations Development Programme (A/49/414 and A/49/459)

Mr. Hurst (Antigua and Barbuda): When my Prime Minister, Mr. Lester Bryant Bird, addressed the General Assembly four weeks ago, he said:

> "while the United Nations has been a symbol of hope for people from small countries such as mine, much remains for it to do before it can represent to them an organization which ... upholds the rights of their small nations, which promotes their social progress and better standards of life." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Plenary Meetings, 20th meeting, p. 19)*

The United Nations Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, which was held in Barbados last April and May, surely inspired greater hope in the minds of people from small countries. This was the first time in history — certainly the first time in the history of the United Nations — that small island States had become the focus of the Organization's special attention.

However, it certainly was not the first time in history that small islands had become the focus of international attention. Between 1492 and 1763 empires were built by the forceful acquisition of small islands in the Caribbean. These were jewels in the crown of many a prince. In 1763, for example, two Caribbean islands — islands not much larger than mine — were exchanged by warring Powers, in a peace treaty, for what is today the second largest nation on Earth. Such was the value of small islands in the days before the industrial revolution, when the Caribbean produced great wealth for mighty nations.

Today the wealth of the islands of the Caribbean is to be found in its people and their institutions, its biodiverse flora and fauna, its tropical reefs and tropical rain forests and its incredible natural beauty. Hundreds of millions of people, primarily from the industrialized countries, have come to stare at our beauty, to learn a little of our history and to seek respite from a harried life in their maddening metropolises.

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Can the United Nations be more than "a symbol of hope" to people from small island nations? Can the United Nations promote a better standard of life for people from small island States? Can the United Nations uphold the right of small island nations to exist free from the threat of environmental destruction? Much remains for the United Nations to do before it can claim to represent these legitimate aspirations.

When the Global Conference was convened in Barbados and the Programme of Action was negotiated, five very important international implementation directives emerged. These are contained in annex II, Chapter XV, of the report. Today my delegation will address only one of them — to be found in section 5 of that part of the Chapter.

The report mandates the formulation of a range of indicators of economic and ecological vulnerability. These are needed for the purpose of measuring sustainable development in a way that that cannot be accomplished by the crude gross national product (GNP) per capita device. The GNP per capita device is neither apt nor realistic for the purpose of measuring the economic performance of small States. Indeed, everyone deems it, by itself, wholly inadequate for the purpose of measuring sustainable development in any State. The GNP per capita device was developed by economists from large countries, with large countries in mind, and at a time when they could not envision the existence of a small island State, much less the application of such a device to so recent a phenomenon.

The GNP per capita device does not reflect the fact that our island States are too small to provide for their populations, at a low cost, many of the services routinely afforded to citizens of large countries. As the economists would say, we suffer from a "diseconomy of scale". The GNP per capita device fails to reflect our inability to penetrate markets for our embryonic manufacturing industries, whose production levels reflect small scale. It does not give an adequate representation of our vulnerability. A single hurricane can set our development back 10 years or more when it destroys 50 per cent of our housing stock, completely devastates our agriculture and damages for a long time our precious but fragile tourism industry. A month ago Saint Lucia, which is in the eastern Caribbean, was visited by a tropical storm, which destroyed more than 80 per cent of its banana crop. This represented more than half of Saint Lucia's annual gross domestic product. Our proneness to natural disaster cannot be disregarded, given the frequency and inevitability of such incidents.

We join in the expressions of condolence to the Government and the people of Egypt following the recent natural disaster in that country and its horrible consequences, including the loss of life.

In our region, even man-made and unintended circumstances can have an impact on our economic performance in ways that large countries can avoid. During the gulf war, for example — 5,000 miles away from the Caribbean — fear of terrorism caused many people to cancel their travel plans. The effect on our peaceful tourist destinations was devastating. The GNP per capita device does not, and cannot, reflect that vulnerability. We decry its use because it paints an inaccurate picture of our development status. It also fails to measure the environmental costs associated with production, consumption and disposal in any nation. The need for a more useful set of economic-performance indicators is surely very evident in this post-Rio world.

The Conference report recommends that

> "Appropriate expertise should continue to be utilized in the development, compilation and updating of the vulnerability index." *(A/CONF.167/9, para. 114)*

In this regard, the University of Malta and the University of the West Indies, among others, must be congratulated for providing the necessary intellectual resources. The emerging vulnerability index is not intended for use as a yardstick of poverty or wealth; rather, it is intended as a device for measuring the lack of economic resilience arising from the relative inability of a country to shelter itself from forces outside its control. It is easy to construct; the results are not difficult to comprehend; and it lends itself to international comparisons.

Today we embrace the attempt to bring novel and improved thinking to the development process, for by succeeding, small island States will have contributed to the emergence of a better world. We join, in that regard, the statements made by the Group of 77, the delegation of Barbados on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States. We are thankful to the organs and agencies of the United Nations system for the roles they have played in implementing various facets of the Barbados Programme of Action.

Most important, my delegation applauds and thanks the Government and the people of Barbados for having

sacrificed much in order to make our island voices heard. Our efforts will come to naught if the industrialized countries do not cease and desist from engaging in harmful production patterns, wasteful consumption lifestyles and deadly disposal behaviours. Global warming and sea-level rise threaten the very existence of small island States; until our skies cease to be a dump site for harmful gases, our small countries will remain vulnerable and threatened.

Our United Nations must uphold our right to exist free of the threat of destruction. The next 50 years will be critical. We believe that our United Nations possesses the will and the power to harness the forces of good for sustained development and a reversal of environmental decline. The citizens of small island developing States wish to move from seeing the United Nations as symbol to embracing it as saviour.

Mr. Edwards (Marshall Islands): On behalf of the people and the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, I would like to join with the previous statements expressing sympathy and condolences to the Government and the people of Egypt on the natural disaster that they are experiencing.

Let me also reiterate the sentiments in regards to the election of President Essy that were expressed on behalf of the Republic of the Marshall Islands by Mr. Phillip Muller, Minister for Foreign Affairs, in his statement in the general debate.

We have just heard a statement on behalf of the South Pacific by Australia, a statement by Trinidad and Tobago as Chairman of the Alliance of Small Island States, and a statement by the Group of 77. My delegation fully supports those statements. On behalf of my Government, I would also like to pay a special tribute to the Government and the people of Barbados for the hospitality and friendship they extended to the delegation of the Marshall Islands during the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

My delegation had high hopes and aspirations when we set out on the road that led us to the Barbados Conference. All the long hours and lengthy negotiations tested our patience, and we were glad to see that the world's attention would finally be focused on the small island States. We have stated many times that we feel our group of countries is a much-neglected group in the United Nations family of nations. To show our sincere commitment to the Rio process and its follow-up, we have implemented many projects in the Marshall Islands aimed at sustainable development, with many more in the planning stage. It was in that spirit that we arrived in Barbados.

The Conference itself was very fruitful in strengthening old links and forging new relations among the leaders of the small island States. Our leaders were full of resolve to ensure that the partnership we had started upon in Rio should not be lost as we moved forward from Barbados. However, I would be less than frank if I did not mention the chagrin that was felt at the low turnout from the developed countries. This was after all supposed to be a conference "on" and not "of" small island developing States.

Let us look closely at one of the outcomes of Barbados — the Programme of Action and its recommendations. On the whole, the first chapters contain most of the requirements that my Government has envisaged in order to reach sustainable development. We would have preferred stronger language under the international action sections, but we joined in the consensus, since funding would be a separate issue considered as a whole. My Government stands ready to implement those national commitments that are not yet in place and to work jointly with our region, as outlined by Australia. However, we cannot pursue these goals without the assistance of the international community. In this regard, I wish to commend those countries that have stood by the Pacific Islands and that have provided urgently needed assistance. We appreciate what has been provided, and we shall remain grateful for such assistance.

Therefore, we feel that the section of the Programme concerning funding is totally inadequate. We may, as the relevant paragraph says, seek to ensure that appropriate attention is given to the concerns of the small island States by the various international institutions. The danger is that such a vague sentence will undermine our efforts on the implementation level. We are grateful to those friends who continue to support us, and my Government strongly urges the developed countries to extend some of their official development assistance to the small island States. We also support the call made by the Group of 77 to ensure that the 0.7 per cent target for official development assistance is reached.

On institutional follow-up, we recognize that there should be an identifiable unit within the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development. This office should have sufficient staff to be able properly to

carry out its duties and mandates. This is stated very clearly in paragraph 123 of the Programme of Action, and I strongly believe that we are not micro-managing the Secretary-General if we voice the opinion that there should be at least four professional staff members dedicated to implementing the outcomes of the Barbados Conference. We also feel that the regional strengthening of the economic commissions should occur at the subregional level wherever possible. For the Pacific, this would mean the Pacific Operations Centre of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, based in Port Vila, Vanuatu.

We commend the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for the work carried out on the two feasibility studies. In particular, we are glad to see the report on the technical assistance programme for small island developing States (SIDS/TAP), as we have been aware, ever since we became a Member of the United Nations, of shortcomings in the area of technical cooperation among developing countries. In our opinion, the SIDS/TAP programme could be implemented immediately, as the international framework required is more or less already in place.

We also welcome the study done on the small island developing States information network (SIDS/NET); it is being studied in great detail in our capital. There are still some unanswered questions, but we are hopeful that we can have a period of consultations with UNDP and donor countries to see how this programme could be implemented. For many small island States, SIDS/NET would entail a considerable investment. We need to look at this in detail through careful examination.

These proposals are directed at capacity-building in the small island States, a critical element in sustainable development. But we have to realize that a certain degree of capacity-building is required before we can get to the level of implementing these proposals nationally. I must add that we are disappointed that these two reports were not translated and distributed at an earlier date.

We were all very much aware that the Barbados Conference was an ambitious undertaking. At the same time, we were reminded that it would be the first follow-up to Rio — in essence, a test of the international will to implement Agenda 21. We were told by experts that the islands would be useful arenas for pilot projects because of their small scale and relative isolation. The cost would also be much less — or so those experts said.

Our negotiating partners had different ideas as far as the cost was concerned. A journalist from the Pacific proposed the following headline for his final report: "North to Islands: Swim." It seemed to him that the North was only reaffirming existing pledges and programmes, and that the islands would have to turn to each other for assistance and advice. This has even been reiterated in a well-known journal that often circulates in this very building.

The Marshall Islands, together with the other island countries of the Pacific region, did not come to the Barbados Conference empty-handed. Our forests, atmospheres, exclusive economic zones, marine ecosystems and coral reefs contribute a great deal to the preservation, if not the betterment, of the overall global environment. We would not like to come away with less.

We know what the sustainable development needs of the Marshall Islands are. The costs envisaged to meet those needs are minute in comparison with the costs of giant development projects around the world. Our requests are not extravagant.

I appeal to the States Members of this Organization to look closely at the commitments freely made at Rio and to reaffirm to the members of the Alliance of Small Island States that they will fulfil those commitments. Furthermore, I would like to invite the Member States to look favourably on the draft resolution that will be submitted by the Alliance of Small Island States through the Group of 77, and to ensure its passage and implementation.

Mr. George (Federated States of Micronesia): We join you, Mr. President, and previous speakers in expressing our sympathy to the people and Government of Egypt on the loss of life and destruction suffered as a result of the recent flood.

The Ambassador of Australia has spoken for all the Pacific Forum countries, including the Federated States of Micronesia, on this important item — the report on and outcomes of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held in Barbados from 26 April to 6 May 1994.

At the outset, I should like, on behalf of my Government, to thank the Government of Barbados for the excellent arrangements it made, for its hospitality and for its valuable contributions to the success of the Global Conference.

I should like also to express my Government's appreciation to Australia's Ambassador for the Environment, Penelope Anne Wensley, for the invaluable role she played as Chairperson of the Preparatory and Main Committees of the Barbados Conference.

The Federated States of Micronesia fully supports and associates itself with the regional statement made by Australia in its capacity as Chairman of the South Pacific Forum. I am also happy to say that my country fully supports the statement made by the Ambassador of Trinidad and Tobago as Chairperson of our transregional common-interest group, the Alliance of Small Island States, to which we attach great importance. As a member of the Group of 77, we are in full agreement with the statement made by the Ambassador of Algeria in his capacity as Chairman of our Group.

In 1992, at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), the world community adopted Agenda 21. All the nations gathered at that historic Conference declared that Agenda 21 reflected a global consensus and political commitment at the highest level of cooperation on development and environment. They further stressed that the cooperation of all States was crucial for the fulfilment of the objectives of Agenda 21. It is in this context that we regard the issue under discussion — the report and outcomes of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States — as a subject which is crucial to the Federated States of Micronesia.

For the first time in the history of the United Nations, we have been able to put forward an agenda for world attention concerning the sustainable development of small island developing States. The Barbados Conference was not only the first global conference on sustainable development, but also the first concrete implementation of Agenda 21. Over the past two years or so, many delegations have spent time, effort and energy in the complex preparations and negotiations which led to the adoption of the Programme of Action in Barbados in May 1994. Given the human, technical, financial and political complexities of that process, we all know now how great a challenge sustainable development really is. While addressing that challenge has been a demanding exercise for all involved, we are now embarking on yet another stage, which will require much greater effort than before. As we all know, the implementation stage of the Barbados Programme of Action is a tremendous task, which awaits the greatest commitment of the international community.

It is exceedingly crucial to understand that, if we fail to breathe life into the Programme of Action, all of our efforts will be futile. In Rio we all joined in pursuing a new agenda for the twenty-first century. It is even clearer to us today that partnership participation in the sustainable development movement will require the genuine commitment and support of the international community, especially that of the industrialized countries.

My delegation believes that the ongoing work of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly is exceptionally important, because, as we continue to build on the achievements of previous years, the international environment and sustainable development agenda will need to be tightly focused, with a common objective, in the process leading up to the full review conference on the overall implementation of the UNCED outcomes by the General Assembly in 1997.

The Federated States of Micronesia became deeply involved in the various UNCED-related activities as its priority when it joined the United Nations at the beginning of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. We believe that the journey from Rio has had many significant milestones. One of the significant achievements is the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. The Programme of Action that emerged from the Global Conference is the first post-Rio effort to amplify the principles of Agenda 21 in a specific context pointing towards tangible measures for implementation. We are now at a stage when mechanisms have been established to give impetus to the implementation of these measures. With such mechanisms in place as the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Conventions on climate change, desertification and biodiversity, and the restructured Global Environment Facility (GEF), the international community finds itself ever more obliged to give the highest priority to the international environment agenda. All of these mechanisms offer a unique contribution to the collective international effort towards sustainable development in significant ways.

Much has already been done in our region to put into effect the commitments undertaken in the Programme of Action. At the regional level, the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) has been active in the coordination of a number of activities in the area of sustainable development, including a regional biodiversity programme funded by the pilot phase of the GEF. At the national level, despite many difficulties that my country faces as a small island State,

the Federated States of Micronesia has already begun to take positive steps towards sustainable development. As a first step, and in recognition of the importance of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, my Government has created a widely representative National Sustainable Development Board to monitor the integration of sustainable development policies into government action to assist with the analysis and coordination of projects.

We welcome the recent report of the Secretary-General on actions taken by the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to implement the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. With particular attention to paragraphs 139 and 140 of that report, under the heading "Institutional Arrangements", we especially call for the support of our developed-country partners for the creation of an identifiable entity within the United Nations Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, as called for in paragraph 123 of the Programme of Action. Resources are required in order to have this identifiable entity established and functioning as the focal point within the Department to provide substantive secretariat support, follow-up, monitoring, review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action. As the identifiable entity is envisaged as reporting to the Commission on Sustainable Development and other relevant bodies on the implementation of the Programme of Action, it will ensure that the outcomes of the Barbados Conference are effectively integrated into the Commission's thematic programme of work.

My country also welcomes the cooperative and prompt efforts of the United Nations Development Programme in undertaking a feasibility study, as called for in the Programme of Action, on an information network and a technical assistance programme for small island developing States. While these feasibility studies are a valuable contribution to giving impetus to the attainment of the objectives and outcomes of the Barbados Conference, they should be seen as an information and technical network to move forward and complement the 14 substantive sectoral areas in the Programme of Action yet to be implemented.

I wish to point out that it was with recognition of the special vulnerabilities of small island developing States on global environmental problems, particularly with respect to climate change, biological diversity and international waters, that the Programme of Action specifically requested that the restructured GEF should be seen as an important channel of assistance in these areas, through the provision of new and additional resources. At the meeting of Heads of State of members of the South Pacific Forum, which was held in Brisbane, Australia, the Forum welcomed the restructuring and replenishment of the GEF and its intention to assist in the outcomes of the Barbados Conference.

We are not only the inhabitants of this planet, but also custodians of the shared resources which will be essential to the survival of future generations. It is in this light that we call for a strong partnership, to be seen not along lines of developed countries versus developing countries, but, rather, as a shared goal and investment for the benefit of the entire family of nations. As the Programme of Action clearly sets out the actions to be implemented at the international, regional and national levels, my country urges all Member States to support during the remainder of the forty-ninth session the overall outcome of the Barbados Conference, including all the enabling resolutions, which will give the specialized United Nations agencies and organizations the mandate to start implementing the substance of the Programme of Action.

Mr. Samana (Papua New Guinea): My delegation fully endorses and associates itself with the statements made by the Chairpersons of the Group of 77, the Alliance of Small Island States and the South Pacific Forum, who have eloquently expressed and conveyed the significance and the importance of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

We believe that the Barbados Conference was a major historical milestone which provided the impetus to the international community to demonstrate its commitment to the promise of Rio in 1992. It also offered a positive opportunity for greater participation and involvement by the international community in the important areas and issues of common interest and concern to mankind.

Papua New Guinea maintains and shares the view that the sustainable development of small island developing States and their survival depend critically on the cooperation of the international community for the full and immediate implementation of the Programme of Action.

Papua New Guinea is already in the process of introducing appropriate policies and legislative measures to give added substance to the Programme of Action and the realization of the overall goals and objectives of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

It has been realized, by many at the national and international levels, that the indiscriminate depletion of natural resources, and its adverse effects on the global environment and subsequent effects on climate change, pollution, rises in the sea- level and environmental degradation, is becoming critical, imposing serious limitations particularly on the development and the very existence and sustenance of small island developing States.

The small island developing States possess within their national and regional surroundings natural habitats that house unique species of flora and fauna.

The international community's recognition of the important role of small island developing States as custodians of valuable biodiversity is not only timely but indeed a positive step towards creating a greater opportunity for the attainment of sustainable development for the benefit of all our citizens.

At the Barbados Conference, a strong political message was sent to the world by the participation of our Governor-General, Sir Wiwa Korowi who, among others, challenged the international community to provide the necessary resources to implement not only the Barbados Programme of Action but also the overall outcome of the Rio process.

Papua New Guinea is of the firm view that the success of the Barbados Conference, like all other United Nations conferences, largely depends on the willingness of the donor countries to provide adequate technical and financial resources to ensure its full implementation.

The Programme of Action highlights a number of development strategies which are important in promoting sustainable development. More specifically, these strategies include, human resource development, institutional capacity-building, and the promotion of international cooperation in the transfer of technology, trade and investments.

Our existing foreign and domestic policies are geared towards achieving sustainable development, through the application of sound management practices in the exploitation of natural resources. This is done through the establishment, since independence, of environmental planning and protection legislation that sets legal mechanisms for the monitoring of environmental pollutants, against required levels, and effectively polices the activities of industry in terms of adherence to national environmental planning guidelines. This legislation sets limits, for instance, in the case of forest resources and parameters for sustainable harvesting.

The direct involvement of the international community as well as relevant United Nations specialized agencies is needed in order effectively to fulfil the various programme requirements and directly to support national and regional efforts and priorities. In this regard, we welcome the actions that have already been taken through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), particularly the Feasibility Study on a Technical Assistance Programme for Small Island Developing States, including two subregional workshops held in Fiji and Barbados.

We are also pleased to acknowledge a joint initiative of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (HABITAT), UNDP and the World Bank on an urban management and environmental sanitation programme in a number of South Pacific island countries.

At the regional level, a number of programmes have been initiated, complementing the international Programme of Action and including: the promotion of coastal area management; the efficient use of energy resources; increased participation in global research, assessment, the monitoring and mapping of climate impacts; the provision of technical assistance; the strengthening of disaster preparedness and institutional management; and the establishment of mechanisms to restrict the transboundary movement of hazardous wastes; and the monitoring of marine pollution.

Papua New Guinea has initiated a move towards the establishment of a regional convention on the prevention of the transboundary movement of hazardous and toxic wastes, which is now in its final negotiating stages and is expected to come into force in 1995. This, we believe, is a major step towards the overall management and protection of our environment.

Papua New Guinea has also embarked on an inter-island transportation project and has removed trade and migration barriers, with some members of the South Pacific Forum, to be consistent with the international consensus on the promotion of equitable trade and

investment to achieve sustained economic growth and sustainable development.

Papua New Guinea is particularly vulnerable to potential environmental degradation, in the sense that 60 per cent of its revenues come from the exportation of mining and petroleum resources, including forest and fisheries resources. Ironically, therefore, these industries require the greatest attention and need to be monitored closely for any potential adverse effects and environmental degradation.

The National Government and UNDP is creating a National Sustainable Development Strategy which, *inter alia*, will oversee the implementation of the Programme of Action.

We therefore believe that the international community, working through and with the regional and subregional organizational mechanisms, can effectively implement the Programme of Action that will further strengthen and enhance international development cooperation in pursuit of sustainable development.

We look forward to the report of the Commission on Sustainable Development on the implementation of the Programme at the next session, when we will continue to make constructive contributions to the work of the Commission. Thus, we would encourage the various agencies, including the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development, to give greater consideration to the implementation of the Programme of Action.

The success of the Barbados Programme of Action critically hinges on the positive support of the international community in the effective implementation of national and regional programmes.

Papua New Guinea looks forward, with a greater sense of confidence in our endeavour, to the realization of the goals of sustainable development pertaining to the particular needs and aspirations of the small island developing States as a prerequisite in developing the national and regional capacity to contribute effectively in our global partnership to ensure a better future for our children.

Mr. Maruyama (Japan): At the outset, my delegation would like to join previous speakers in expressing its deepest sympathy to the Government and the people of Egypt on the tragic loss incurred as a result of the recent flood.

My delegation would like to congratulate the Government of Barbados for having successfully convened the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, in response to the challenge we set for ourselves at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, and to thank those who devoted so much time and effort to preparing for it. The Programme of Action and the Barbados Declaration adopted at the Conference are indeed landmarks on the road from Rio. They provide fresh impetus to the work of the international community on the sustainable development of small island developing States.

It was a historic conference, in as much as it established a firm basis for directing the attention of the international community to small island developing States and the serious problems they face in achieving sustainable development. The Programme of Action is the first step taken by the international community to help them address those problems. Our next task is to ensure its implementation on the basis of the partnership created at the Conference. The Government of Japan, for its part, will be guided by the Programme of Action and by the spirit of the Declaration of Barbados in the delivery of bilateral and multilateral development assistance to small island developing States.

The Programme of Action emphasizes the importance of human resource development to the sustainable development of small island developing States and pinpoints specific issues such as education, training and research and development as being of particular significance. It also rightly emphasizes the importance of enhancing institutional and administrative capacity. This is an orientation that is in accord with the policy of Japan with respect to its development assistance to developing countries, one of whose major priorities is enhancement of self-reliance. There is a synergy that is produced when effective national efforts are supported by external assistance. Japan is determined to work to enhance that synergy.

My delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on action taken by the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to implement the Programme of Action, and also for his notes transmitting the studies undertaken by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on the feasibility of developing a Small Island Developing States

technical assistance programme (SIDS/TAP) and a Small Island Developing States information network (SIDS/NET).

As the Secretary-General rightly points out, the report should be considered to be of an interim nature. In view of the important role of the United Nations system, my delegation believes that it is vital to conduct a continuing review of plans and programmes for implementing the Programme of Action, and it therefore looks forward to further reports. In that connection, it would welcome the review of the Programme of Action by the Inter-agency Committee on Sustainable Development suggested in the Secretary-General's report.

My delegation particularly welcomes and supports the results of the studies undertaken by UNDP on the SIDS/TAP technical assistance programme and the SIDS/NET information network. Cooperation is of vital importance in enhancing self-reliance by small island developing States, and both SIDS/TAP and SIDS/NET are designed to strengthen such cooperation. This, too, is a goal that is in line with the policy of Japan, which attaches importance to South-South cooperation in strengthening international cooperation for development.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to assure you, Mr. President, that Japan will make every effort to play an active role in implementing the decisions reached at the historic first Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

Mr. Balzan (Malta): I join previous speakers in expressing deepest sympathy and solidarity with the Government and the people of Egypt at this trying time, as they deal with the tragic consequences of the recent floods.

The Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, which was convened in Barbados earlier this year, marked the first concrete measure emanating from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. The Barbados Conference successfully accomplished its task. It specified relevant policies within a framework of a Programme of Action aimed at enabling small island developing States to achieve sustainable development.

Unquestionably, credit must be given to the Government of Barbados for the excellent organization and to the people of Barbados for the cordial hospitality extended to delegations. Our gratitude goes also to Prime Minister Sandiford for the able and skilful manner in which he steered the Conference to a successful conclusion.

The delegation of Malta views the current debate on the report of the Barbados Conference as a manifestation of the importance the international community attaches to the well-being of small island developing States. My Government welcomes the report (A/49/425) of the Secretary General, on the action taken by the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to implement the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

While affirming the human and natural assets pertaining to small island developing States, the Declaration of Barbados did not fail to highlight the hurdles that need to be overcome. In aiming at the attainment of a better quality of life for present and future generations, the document adopts an exemplary wide-ranging approach.

Comprehensive as it is, the Programme of Action negotiated and agreed upon at Bridgetown addresses innumerable issues relating to the sustainable development of small island States, issues which have been repeatedly underscored and which have been universally recognized. In 1992, in Rio, the international community identified the particular problems faced by small island States as a special case with regard both to environment and to development. If not catered for, their size, geographic location and limited resources could constitute particular vulnerabilities.

At times, the size and geographic location of States in this category impose in themselves a number of economic disadvantages. In some cases, these disadvantages are multiplied as a consequence of natural disasters. In fact, vulnerability to external economic influences and ecological fragility are major concerns for small island developing States.

A reality at times overlooked was pointed out by the Governor-General of Barbados, Her Excellency Dame Nita Barrow, in her address to the Conference in Barbados, namely, that one sixth of the Earth's surface, including a significant portion of its marine and biodiversity resources, falls under the jurisdiction of small island States. This element is noted, more than as a matter of pride, because one cannot ignore its inherent implications or its impact on the world community as a whole.

Small island States are fully aware of their problems, but likewise cognizant of their responsibilities, responsibilities that, if shared, could be better addressed and more easily resolved. Hence the need to encourage and enhance regional and international cooperation.

History teaches us that small island States, in their effort to survive, have always invested in their human resources. This is one investment which has never failed. On the contrary, it has consistently yielded high dividends.

Malta, itself a small island State, is living proof that the best investment lies in the development of human resources. Innovative and traditional economic activities that have been undertaken have given our islands the impetus needed to put the economy on a sound platform.

Small island States, notwithstanding their diverse characteristics, have always played an important role in the multilateral process. Through their experience, gained in the course of their long history, they can continue to contribute to enhancing international political and economic cooperation.

The Convention on the Law of the Sea, which will soon enter into force, and the proposal to include climate change as an item on the agenda of the General Assembly — both launched by Malta — are two examples of the manner in which a State, regardless of its size, can contribute to the well-being of mankind.

In this context, my country welcomes the inclusion in the Programme of Action of its proposal to set up a vulnerability index to serve as a supplementary yardstick to measure the degree and extent of vulnerabilities in terms both of economic structures and of institutions.

A main agenda item currently being discussed within the Organization is the issue of development. Endless discussions at different levels have identified the basic elements necessary for socio-economic sustainability. The Assembly is expected shortly to debate the measures essential for the enhancement of development. The requirements and concerns of the category of small island States should not be sidelined.

Barbados does not mark the end of an exercise; rather, it signals the commencement of an ongoing process which monitors and ensures that the results obtained are consolidated and augmented.

Traditional wisdom teaches us that a problem shared is a problem halved.

As my delegation pointed out in Barbados, the involvement and assistance of the international community in resolving issues which may hinder or arrest the sustainable development of small island developing States have to be viewed from a much wider perspective. That wider perspective necessarily includes the inverse proportionality of the importance which small island States have in key strategic areas of the globe. Conscious as they are of the responsibilities and hardships which their sensitive location has often placed on them, small island States are in the forefront in championing dialogue as the unique tool for fostering greater harmony and coexistence.

Dialogue is at the root of any approach to the resolution of problems. Dialogue helps identify problems and stimulates solutions. Dialogue re-cements what conflicts often undo. In so doing dialogue demands as its basic element solidarity in action — solidarity which warrants a comprehensive approach; solidarity which should not be limited to mere words but should serve as the means to translate words into deeds.

Mr. Pierre (Guyana): I wish first to extend condolences to the Government and people of Egypt on the recent occurrences that have resulted in the tragic loss of life and suffering in that country.

My delegation is happy to register its concurrence with the statements delivered by the delegation of Barbados on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the delegation of Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77.

The Rio Conference on Environment and Development gave the world perhaps its clearest signal yet that the problems confronting humanity are so grave and urgent that they require treatment at the highest level possible. That Summit was equally unequivocal in its emphasis on the unique nature and vulnerability of small island States and of low-lying coastal regions.

The situation confronting small island developing States in an increasingly competitive global economic and political environment is very aptly depicted in chapter 17 of Agenda 21. Small island States are indeed a special case both for environment and for development. They are ecologically fragile and vulnerable. Their small size, limited resources, geographical dispersion and isolation

from markets place them at a grave disadvantage economically and prevent the realization of any benefits of economies of scale.

In Barbados in April this year we met and deliberated successfully on the special circumstances affecting this group of partners. That occasion marked the first major substantive follow-up process to the Rio Conference and was unique for this and for its focus on a specific and important concern. Our task henceforth will be to pursue with equal vigour and enthusiasm the full and urgent implementation of the agreements and decisions reached at that Conference. Guyana joins in urging the full endorsement of the Barbados Declaration and the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, contained in document A/CONF.167/9, now before the Assembly for consideration.

Important as they are, those agreements will amount to very little unless appropriate mechanisms are established for effective monitoring and implementation of actions on a system-wide basis. To this end, we believe that it is essential that this responsibility be appropriately located within the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, as provided for in the Programme of Action. That Department should therefore be adequately equipped for the proper fulfilment of its responsibility for monitoring and coordination and for the provision of an effective support structure for the follow-up to the Conference decisions.

Two areas of critical importance to small island States are information technology and capacity-building that would enhance the capacity of those States to better utilize and harness the assets of their rich natural habitat. In this connection, the proposals for projects in the small islands developing States information network (SIDS/NET) and the small islands developing States technical assistance programme (SIDS/TAP) set forth a full scope of work. The efficient and prompt manner in which the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has responded to a mandate given it to prepare studies on these proposals deserves our full commendation.

Those studies are contained in additional reports also before us for approval. Two noteworthy features of the projects need to be underscored: the emphasis placed on local capacity-building, and the utilization of indigenous knowledge. I urge the Assembly to endorse the report now before us and to give its full support to the action outlined therein.

The extensive preparatory process in which we were all engaged and the exemplary deliberations in the Conference itself and in its other processes, such as the meeting of the Group of Eminent Persons and the Forum of the Non-Governmental Organization, all converged into the highly successful outcome of which we now speak. Our highest commendations must go to the Government of Barbados and to the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) for their roles and efforts in ensuring such an outcome. It now behooves us in the General Assembly to treat the implementation and follow-up process with equal seriousness and determination, in order to give true meaning to what has been accomplished.

Mr. Turnquest (Bahamas): Let me at the outset associate myself with other speakers in expressing to the Government and the people of Egypt the condolences and sympathy of my delegation on the tragic loss of life and damage resulting from the recent floods.

The Bahamas associates itself with the commendations made by other delegations concerning the successful outcome of the first-ever Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held earlier this year in Barbados. The Government of Barbados is to be congratulated for the excellent arrangements made for the Conference and for the care taken of delegations attending the meeting.

My delegation is pleased to endorse the comments made by the representative of Algeria on behalf of the Group of 77, and by the representative of Trinidad and Tobago on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) on this important item. We also fully associate ourselves with the statement made on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) by the representative of Barbados.

The Assembly has before it for its consideration the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, as well as the Barbados Declaration. The Bahamas considers that the Programme of Action provides a blueprint for a comprehensive and integrated approach to sustainable development by small island developing States. It tackles the numerous issues that we as island developing States must address in our pursuit of sustainable development. The Declaration is a statement of our collective political will. It is really the reaffirmation of the commitments which were made in Rio. The international community is called upon to fully

support and provide the effective means for the implementation of this Programme.

While we view the Programme of Action as an excellent blueprint for focusing our efforts and commitments towards the sustainable development of small island developing States, it is recognized that the successful implementation of the Programme will need the full support of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development within the United Nations. We view the Secretariat support unit as a vital component of the implementation strategy. In this regard, the necessary resources must be provided to the Secretariat in order that it may fulfil the functions outlined in paragraph 123 of the Programme.

My delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General, and is indeed pleased with the initial efforts of the various development agencies of the United Nations system in including the Programme of Action in their respective work programmes. More importantly, it is noted that certain agencies have actually commenced activities which fulfil various aspects of the Programme of Action. In this regard, we commend the World Meteorological Organization for its activities and programmes in several substantive areas of the Programme of Action, particularly its specific programmes for climate change and sea-level rise, which represent a major concern for island States like my own.

The Commission for Sustainable Development has a mandate to review the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action within the context of its multi-year thematic programme of work. We are aware that due to time constraints, very little work was accomplished in the previous session. We are, however, hopeful that there will be an effective means for monitoring and reviewing the progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action. We assure the Assembly that, as a newly elected member of the Commission on Sustainable Development, we are committed to play our role in the work of that Commission.

In this connection, I am pleased to report that the Bahamas is in the process of establishing a national commission on science, technology and sustainable development. It is expected that the commission will be headed by an executive director and will be responsible for the follow-up of Agenda 21, the two Conventions arising from the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the Barbados Declaration and Programme of Action. The membership of the commission will reflect a wide cross-section of the Bahamian community, including Government officials, academics, the church, business and industrial interests and non-governmental organizations.

My delegation is indeed pleased and encouraged to note the prompt response by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to the mandates given to it at Barbados in paragraphs 105, 106 and 126 of the Programme of Action to support capacity-building in small island developing States. With regard to paragraph 105, the UNDP was directed to coordinate a feasibility study in collaboration with the small island developing States and relevant subregional organizations for the implementation of a small island developing States information network (SIDS/NET). However, while we view SIDS/NET as a means of enhancing human networking, which equips small island developing States with the capacity to respond to the priorities of the Programme of Action, it will be effective only if its information component is one in which we, as island developing States, are the primary generators of information for the network.

The United Nations Development Programme was also mandated, under paragraph 106 of the Programme of Action, to coordinate a feasibility study on a technical assistance programme for small island developing States (SIDS/TAP). This directive has been ably fulfilled by UNDP, as reported by the Secretary-General in document A/49/459. My Government is currently studying this report with great interest. We are pleased with the manner in which the study was conducted, that is, that there was close cooperation with the AOSIS core group of States, regional institutions, non-governmental organizations and the island States themselves. The Bahamas notes, too, the commitment by SIDS/TAP to involve as much as possible experts from small island developing countries.

The Bahamas wishes to raise one small concern, however, and that is that it be treated fully as a small island developing State. The existence of a relatively elevated gross national product per capita ought not to operate in the Programme as a bar to equal treatment. I take this opportunity to mention this point, as it ought to be borne in mind that several island developing States have now graduated from UNDP assistance as well as from concessional treatment by most other international financial institutions. We see this mechanism, therefore, as one where the excluding criteria would not be applied.

Small island developing States are noted for their species diversity and endemism. However, due to their small size, their relative isolation and the fragility of island ecosystems, their biological diversity is among the most threatened in the world. We take this opportunity to note that the Barbados Programme of Action contains agreement on action to formulate and implement integrated strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of such territorial and marine biodiversity, and in particular of endemic species.

In this regard, we commend the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) for taking the leadership within the United Nations system in forging a new relationship between the United Nations agencies, a global partnership to respond to current and future needs of Member States in such areas as climate change and species protection. We are pleased to note that UNEP will be convening the first conference of the parties to the biodiversity Convention in the Bahamas from 28 November to 9 December 1994. We are confident that the outcome of that Conference will continue to focus the attention of the international community on small island developing States and their special needs and circumstances.

Although it is recognized that financing for the implementation of the Programme of Action must come primarily from national public and private sources within the small island developing States, it has also been recognized that implementation of the Programme of Action will require the provision of adequate, predictable, new additional financial resources. In this connection, we take the opportunity to urge the international community once again to honour the financial commitments made and to review our first full-fledged test of global partnership forged at Rio, by which the international community made firm commitments to work collectively to guarantee sustainable development. Fulfilling pledged commitments will certainly enable small island developing States to make operational the blueprint of the Programme of Action of the Barbados Conference.

Mr. Shambos (Cyprus): I should like to join you, Mr. President, and previous speakers in expressing profound condolences and sympathy to the Government and people of Egypt for the tragic loss in human lives and property caused by the wrath of nature.

Small island developing States, a unique and valuable component of our global environmental and developmental undertakings, have finally achieved their due recognition by attaining their rightful place on our agenda.

The culmination of this recognition was the convening of the Barbados Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held at Bridgetown from 25 April to 6 May of this year. My Government expresses appreciation to the Government and people of Barbados for the excellent conference arrangements, which led to the successful conclusion of that historic gathering, and for the warm hospitality extended to all participants.

The Barbados Conference itself can undoubtedly be characterized as a success. Its Programme of Action and the Barbados Declaration delineate the commitments of mankind to the survival and progress of this vulnerable and vital component of our globe's delicate and complex ecological and developmental balance.

The convening of the Conference is to a great extent an achievement that should be attributed to the dedication and persistent adherence of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) to the cause of the special environmental and developmental needs of small island States.

The Republic of Cyprus, itself a member of AOSIS, embraced at an early stage the just cause of this pioneering exercise and will continue to work for the realization and furtherance of its goals.

With regard to the activities of AOSIS, special recognition is due its current Chairman, the Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago, Ambassador Annette des Isles, and all the staff of her mission, as well as to her predecessor, the former Permanent Representative of Vanuatu, Robert Van Lierop, the spiritual father of AOSIS, whose personal vision and extraordinary dedication to the goals set have made today's achievements an attainable reality.

The Barbados AOSIS Summit and its Communiqué, which was unanimously adopted, highlight the moral dimensions of this exercise and prescribe the political messages small island States are sending to the international community.

The Barbados Conference indeed marked a milestone in our history by honouring with commitments the promises of Rio to one of the most vulnerable groups of our community of States.

However, recognition and awareness alone will not suffice to cure the acute problems small island developing States are facing today. The degradation of their

environment, their vulnerability to the adverse effects of human-induced climate change, the rise in sea level and subsequent submersion of their territories, the imminent threats to their unique ecosystems and biodiversity contributions all emerge as urgent issues of great concern. Their primarily single-product markets, their small size and their remoteness from commercial, trade and technological centres, the fragility and small scale of their economies, their lack of adequate endogenous capacity for independent sustainable development, the vulnerability of their cultures and of their security and their exposure to pollution and natural disasters all aggravate the overall challenges confronting small island developing States. These and a host of other issues are of vital significance and of universal dimension, and call for concerted, effective action if we aspire to succeed in the global effort to save our threatened integrated environment and to achieve sustainable development for every part of our planet.

The international community agonizes over the indifference displayed about growing, crucial environmental and developmental problems and is focusing its attention on the implementation of the Barbados commitments and demanding concerted global action to ensure sustainable development in small island States that would serve not only island interests but vital global interests as well. Being at the centre of the international expectations in this regard, we should respond to the high aspirations of our peoples with the political determination to take concrete and coordinated action to eliminate the ecological and economic vulnerabilities of small islands and cement their significant contribution to the world's fragile environmental balance. This objective is of paramount importance and is fully supported by the Government of the Republic of Cyprus, which has endorsed the principles of sustainable development and the decisions taken in Barbados.

My delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the "Action taken by the organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to implement the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States" (A/49/425). We also welcome the Secretary-General's submission of the feasibility study of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on an information-sharing network for small island States; Cyprus was used as one of the case studies in accomplishing this task. We consider both the report and the submission of the study as significant steps in the right direction. The preservation and enhancement of what has been achieved so far in this vital area depend on our readiness to strictly fulfil the responsibilities and duties emanating from the Barbados documents.

I conclude with the plea that developing and developed countries work together to fulfil our obligations to present and future generations so that this globe, our common home, is not only preserved but also ameliorated in order to secure the continuity of life itself. It is in this just endeavour that the small island States could and should play a leading role. Let us all act collectively to ensure the survival of humankind in an environment conducive to human dignity and prosperity all over the globe.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): I wish first of all to convey to the Government and the people of Egypt Brazil's heartfelt condolences on the tragic events in that country a few days ago.

My delegation would like to express its gratitude to the people and the Government of Barbados for its gracious hospitality last April during the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. In particular, my delegation would like to express its gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Erskine Sandiford, former Prime Minister of Barbados, President of the Conference, and Ambassador Penelope Wensley, whose guidance of the work of the Main Committee of the Conference was fundamental to the importance and scope of the decisions taken in Barbados.

In June 1992 Brazil had the honour to host the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). On that occasion, in Rio, the links between legitimate development goals, environmental concerns and the well-being of future generations were thoroughly established and developed.

The Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island States, which emanated from the decisions taken at UNCED, undoubtedly represented a step ahead and a most significant milestone in the process of mobilizing international efforts towards sustainable development. It was encouraging to note that the Conference in Bridgetown went beyond examining general questions related to sustainable development by adding original input to specific concerns that affect small island States.

The characteristics of small island States and their susceptible ecosystems have made us recognize their

great significance to our planet. Although those States are afflicted by economic difficulties and confronted by development imperatives similar to those of developing countries in general, small island developing States have their own peculiar vulnerabilities and characteristics, and the difficulties they face in the pursuit of sustainable development are particularly severe and complex.

Brazil is well aware of this uniqueness and considers that small island developing States represent a special case for sustainable development, worthy of concerted international attention. The potential of the small island developing States has been recognized. Nevertheless, they are still faced with the challenge of ensuring that their resources are used in a sustainable way for the well-being of present and future generations.

In this regard, my delegation looks forward to the full implementation of both Agenda 21 and the Programme of Action formulated in Barbados. We consider that the Programme of Action represents a basis for action in the agreed priority areas and defines a number of measures and policies related to environmental and development planning that have to be undertaken by small island developing States with the cooperation and assistance of the international community.

Moreover, the Programme of Action outlines the international community's role in providing access to adequate, predictable and additional financial resources, in optimizing the use of existing resources and mechanisms and in adopting measures to support endogenous capacity-building, specifically for the promotion of the access of small island developing States to environmentally sound mechanisms and technology. The Alliance of Small Island States should be warmly congratulated on the important achievements of Bridgetown.

In establishing the basis for a new global partnership for sustainable development, States have acknowledged their common but differentiated responsibilities in respect of global environmental degradation, so that the most environmentally vulnerable will be given priority. The international community therefore has to meet the obligations taken on in Barbados towards small island developing States, for they are the most vulnerable among us and could very well be the first to bear the negative environmental impact of ill-conceived development.

Unfortunately, the international community is apparently still reluctant to meet its financial obligations. Less than 10 per cent of the funding for environment-related programmes and projects agreed on at UNCED has been forthcoming. The financial level at which the Global Environment Facility has been renegotiated is equally discouraging.

My delegation believes that providing small island developing States with the required material support is one of the most important means to enable these countries to achieve greater self-reliance in coping with environmental matters. It is in this context that we call upon delegations to foster financial support for projects and programmes relating to sustainable development. We understand that the implementation of these projects and programmes is a responsibility of the countries directly concerned. Nevertheless, the support of the developed countries, United Nations bodies and specialized intergovernmental agencies is of the utmost importance.

In this regard, my delegation welcomes the study entitled "A Feasibility Study on a Technical Assistance Programme for Small Island Developing States" (A/49/459, Annex). This document outlines a viable facility to support technical cooperation between small island developing States. We are confident that similar studies will be prepared so that effective action can be taken with a view to implementing the decisions contained in the Programme of Action. My delegation fully subscribes to the recommendations contained in the study — especially those regarding the need for the bodies of the United Nations development system to assist the small island developing States in renewing existing activities to ensure that they become compatible with the requirements and aspirations enunciated in the Programme of Action as a whole.

We believe that the post-cold-war world provides us with ample room for new partnerships in the field of genuine cooperation between developing and developed States to effect sustainable development. It is fundamental that the United Nations system and the international community as a whole support the efforts deployed in such a task and that the parameters set at the Barbados Conference to promote the ideals of sustainable and environmentally sound development ensure that the question of adopting mechanisms to guarantee developing States access to the new environmental technologies on favourable terms continue to be addressed on a priority basis.

We consider that the Declaration and the Programme of Action emanating from Barbados derive from Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration and the Convention

on Biological Diversity, which must continue to be our beacons. Let us abide by them, for we are certain that small island developing States, given appropriate assistance by the international community, can and will implement relevant plans and programmes to support their development.

I wish, in conclusion, to quote words used by Mr. Henrique Brandão Cavalcanti, Minister for the Environment of Brazil, in his statement at the opening session in Barbados:

> "The objective of our common effort is, of course, sustainable development. That is nothing but a change in the present patterns of utilization of the Earth's resources in order to achieve sound economic progress without compromising the ability of future generations to do the same, and we must continue to pursue the removal of all obstacles to the attainment of sustainable development."

I must, therefore, stress the great importance of the Barbados Global Conference and call upon the international community to honour the commitments to a new partnership that were undertaken both in Rio and in Bridgetown.

Mr. Bivero (Venezuela) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: I should like to convey Venezuela's condolences to the people and the Government of Egypt following the tragic natural disaster in their country.

The outcomes of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, which took place in Bridgetown, Barbados, earlier this year, are of great importance to Venezuela. The Barbados Declaration and Programme of Action flowed from Agenda 21 in an area that is of particular interest to Venezuela, which has an extensive continental and island coastline on the Caribbean. We share with the small island developing countries of the Caribbean geographical and environmental realities, as well as the obligation to promote sustainable development in our subregion. Venezuela supports the Barbados Programme of Action and would like to reiterate that it is committed to making a contribution to achieving the aims stated therein.

Although the self-sufficiency objective of the Barbados Programme of Action is commendable, the Programme acknowledges the need for the support of the community of donor countries. The channelling of additional funds for regional and interregional cooperation into support activities is turning out to be critical at this stage. We share the objective of the acquisition of new and additional resources, and we are convinced that the implementation of the Programme of Action will demonstrate the need for them in the medium term and in the long term.

In our opinion, capacity-building and the study on a technical assistance programme that was undertaken by the United Nations Development Programme in fulfilment of the request contained in the Programme of Action are of paramount importance at the initial stage.

Venezuela will consider how it might strengthen its support for the Programme.

As Venezuela's Minister for Foreign Affairs indicated during the high-level segment of the Barbados Conference,

> "Venezuela adheres to the Barbados Declaration and considers itself bound by and committed to the Programme of Action."

There are many examples of the way in which global interdependence and shared responsibility have shed light on the problems of the small island developing countries. Only by working together can we benefit from our experiences and try to combine our efforts to solve these problems. To this end, the greatest assets are the human resources of the developing island countries themselves and of other countries whose national development processes are similar to ours, the United Nations system and the community of donor countries.

We now have a comprehensive framework within which to contribute towards supporting the efforts of the small island developing countries. The Barbados Programme of Action will be a milestone in the process of implementing Agenda 21, both politically and economically. We trust that the international community, bilaterally and multilaterally, will respond constructively to this challenge.

Mr. Razali (Malaysia): We all share the concerns of the small island developing States regarding their unique vulnerabilities. These range from economic and ecological difficulties to security challenges. In recognition of the urgent need to address the threats to the survival of small island developing countries, the United Nations, together with the Government of Barbados, hosted the Global Conference on the

Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in Barbados in April-May 1994. Malaysia was represented at ministerial level, as we wanted to demonstrate our solidarity with and our support for the small island developing States.

The Barbados Conference adopted a comprehensive Programme of Action, which addresses the range of issues that affect the small island developing States. The Programme of Action, which contains 15 chapters, serves as the basis of and provides a blueprint for the sustainable development of small island developing States. It must be implemented, in full and in a timely manner.

The Barbados Conference has a special meaning for all of us as, following the Rio Conference, it was the first global meeting, in implementation of Agenda 21, devoted to the question of sustainable development. The implementation of the Barbados commitments would be an important indicator of our collective determination to pursue global sustainable development.

Malaysia considers Chapter XV of the Programme of Action, which relates to implementation, monitoring and review of the programme at the national, regional and international levels, as the most important chapter. Although the implementation of policies and programmes to achieve sustainable development is primarily the responsibility of the countries concerned, the support of the developed countries, United Nations bodies and the specialized intergovernmental bodies is essential. Indeed, this commitment was underscored at the Rio Summit in June 1992. In this regard, the developed countries should honour their commitments made at Rio by supporting the endeavours of the developing countries through the provision of new and additional financial resources and environmentally sound technologies on concessional and preferential terms and through avoidance of resort to environmental conditionalities on trade and development.

Chapter 15 of the Programme of Action also recognizes small island developing States' dependence on overseas markets for value-added exports in areas in which they are internationally competitive and their need to develop those markets. In the area of international trade, the small island developing States face the same problems as do other developing countries with regard to unjustified and unilateral impediments that erode the competitive advantage of developing countries.

While we all need to make the transition to sustainable development, the bulk of the burden of change should not be placed on the developing countries, including the small island States. As it is, the developed countries already possess and enjoy competitive advantages in technology, access to markets and capital and management skills, compared with the severe handicaps of the small island developing States, such as unfavourable terms of trade and prohibitive costs of transportation, arising from their distance and isolation from international shipping routes.

Of no less importance is chapter XIV, which focuses on human-resource development. In this respect, Malaysia is committed to the promotion of South-South cooperation, by which we share and exchange experiences on development matters, especially human-resource development. In 1980 Malaysia launched the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP) in order to provide technical assistance to other developing countries. The MTCP consolidates various forms of technical cooperation in areas where Malaysia has experience and expertise. It is based on the belief that the development of a country depends on the quality of its human resources; hence its emphasis on the development of human resources through training. Malaysia's assistance under the MTCP is essentially in the form of training, conducted either at Malaysian universities or at training institutions. Other forms of assistance include study visits, services of experts, and the provision of supplies and equipment for socio-economic projects. To date, more than 84 countries, including small island States, have benefited in varying degrees from the MTCP.

The small island developing countries could also benefit from participating in the projects implemented by the Group of 15 for the promotion of South-South cooperation. The projects involve training and exchanges in experiences in the fields of finance, trade, information, science and technology, environment and population. Malaysia has also actively cooperated through the Commonwealth, which has played a leadership role in addressing the concerns of small island developing States.

We share the growing concern of the small island developing States, as well as of other developing countries, regarding the transboundary movement of toxic and hazardous waste and the possible damage inflicted by foreign ships carrying toxic and radioactive materials through their seas. Such disposal of toxic, hazardous and radioactive wastes, as well as oil spills and desludging activities that result in the generation of hazardous waste, has a serious effect on both marine and land resources. In this regard, the recommendations contained in

chapter III of the Programme of Action, which calls for international cooperation to ensure the strengthening of institutions to provide assistance to Governments and industry in the adoption of clean technologies as well as in the prevention of pollution and the handling, treatment and disposal of hazardous wastes, should be implemented on a priority basis.

We recognize that small island developing States are in the front line of possible ecological disasters as a result of climate change. As the small island developing States are extremely vulnerable to the impact of climate change, financial and technical support from the developed countries and the international community for monitoring impact assessment and adaptation is an urgent necessity.

The Secretary-General, in response to paragraph 106 of the Programme of Action, has circulated document A/49/459, which contains specific recommendations for technical assistance. The early implementation of these recommendations would mitigate some of the immediate concerns. At the same time, the presence of an entity in the Secretariat to monitor the Programme of Action would ensure that attention continued to be given to the threats and problems facing small island developing States.

Two weeks ago, in the Fourth Committee, we had the occasion to deliberate on the security of small States. A consensus resolution was adopted following the debate, signifying agreement to address the security needs — indeed, the survival needs — of small States. The economic, ecological and security challenges confronting the small island developing States must be effectively addressed to ensure their continued well-being. Our commitment, through the Barbados Programme of Action, to assisting the small island developing States will without any doubt contribute to the long-term sustainable growth, security and stability of small States.

Mr. Gallegos (United States of America): We also join in sending condolences to the Egyptian delegation on the tragic losses resulting from the recent devastating floods.

As the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island States demonstrated, small island developing States are playing an increasingly active and better-defined role in diverse world and regional organizations.

The United States seeks to cooperate with island nations in the struggle to generate sustainable economic growth. The Barbados Conference, which addressed this issue, established an agenda to which we are committed. The agenda outlined steps that need to be taken globally, regionally and locally in 14 key areas. We intend to work with the international community to follow up the Conference in order to give its work real content and to activate the Programme it adopted.

The United States was pleased to take an active role in Barbados. We are moving forward on development of a coral-reef initiative, as explained by Under-Secretary Wirth at the Conference. The United States believes that, because many of the world's coral reefs are located in small island developing States, a practical approach to their protection would address key concerns raised in the Conference such as biodiversity, habitat protection, natural-disaster protection and climate change.

We are working to ensure the participation of developed and developing countries, international and non-governmental organizations, academia and the private sector in this effort. In this regard, let us bear in mind, while considering the issues of sustainable development in small island States, that there is no substitute for private-sector economic growth. Whether one considers what sort of governmental economic policy to put in place, how to educate and train people so as to improve their lives or how to define the type of technical assistance to be sought from abroad, it is the private sector that will ultimately determine the success or failure of the policy. Good government can help, but chiefly in a supportive role, such as spadework organization, start-up infrastructure, the fostering of a positive business climate, and assistance in publicizing the opportunities available. Inefficient government, of course, can quickly do far more to reduce or prevent growth.

In addition to the important coral-reef initiative I have mentioned, my Government expects to follow up on the Barbados Conference in a number of other ways: through bilateral programmes, the World Bank, the regional development banks and other multilateral-assistance agencies.

We continue to advocate sustainable development measures, such as environmental-impact statements, energy efficiency and integrated coastal-resource management. We will work to ensure that the Commission on Sustainable Development undertakes the important reviews that will be necessary to ensure implementation of the Programme of Action.

Mrs. Hassan (Pakistan): On behalf of the Government and people of Pakistan, my delegation would like to express our condolences to our Egyptian brothers, especially those affected by the tragedy, on the loss of life and property in the recent disastrous floods.

My delegation had the great honour to participate in the preparatory process of the first Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and in the Conference itself. My Government's commitment to work with the small island developing countries in finding solutions to their difficult problems was evidenced by the presence of a special representative of Prime Minister Bhutto at the high-level segment of the Barbados Conference.

Today is yet another historic moment in the history of the United Nations, and especially of the developing countries. With the adoption of the Programme of Action agreed at the Barbados Conference, the United Nations will be on the way to implementing this important document, which is expected to directly affect the lives of many in the small island developing States.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the Government of Barbados on the success of the Conference. Our deep admiration also goes to Ambassador Annette des Iles, the Permanent Representative of Trinidad and Tobago, for her stewardship in articulating the viewpoint of the developing countries at the Conference.

Pakistan is not a small island, but we share common perceptions on development issues with our friends from the small island developing States. Our problems are similar in intensity, though they may be a shade different in nature. Pakistan associates itself fully with the views and aspirations of all the developing countries on issues related to the environment and development, and therefore the outcome of the Barbados Conference was extremely important to us. We are convinced that the implementation of the recommendations of the Conference will go a long way in determining the path to be adopted by other developing countries in the pursuance of sustainable development objectives.

Awareness of environmental issues has grown over the past two decades. This awareness has emerged among and within Governments as they have addressed environmental problems singly, bilaterally, regionally and globally. Despite Rio and the apparent shared perceptions regarding environmental problems and actions, environmental degradation has continued unabated, threatening human well-being and, in some instances, the very survival of life on our planet. Environmental issues are the urgent concern of all peoples of the world. They demonstrate in a dramatic way the need for international cooperation.

The high-level segment of the Conference, entitled "Forging partnerships for sustainable development", provided an opportunity for statesmen and high-level representatives to come together and discuss in a frank and open manner whether the commitments made at Rio had led to the forging of a new global partnership for sustainable development. Rio started a realistic process, and the results of the Earth Summit provided a solid base for decisive action based on this new partnership.

It was evident during the discussions in the high-level segment that, while Rio had laid the foundations of this partnership, the destructive patterns of human consumption and production were continuing unabated. Less than 20 per cent of the world's population in the developed countries continue to use 80 per cent of the world's resources. Their decades of unplanned industrialization and unsustainable methods of production and the exploitation of resources without any regard for the future have contributed to the deterioration of the environment, causing environmental changes that threaten the very existence of some small islands.

Small islands are truly, in the words of David Herbert Lawrence,

> "vivid fragments of life (...) they are a celebration, in the sea".

The beauty that surrounds us in an island is, however, threatened by an in-built fragility and vulnerability to the forces of nature, as well as by human and environmental degradation. The Barbados Conference achieved one of its objectives: sensitizing the international community to the problems of the small island developing countries as "high-risk entities".

The gross national product of some small island developing States may place a small number of them among middle-income economies. However, such criteria are certainly extremely deceptive. The sustainability of the economic base of even the most affluent among the small islands cannot be assured, in view of their special circumstances. The international community must recognize this fact. The Programme of Action

acknowledges that the small island developing States face peculiar environmental and development challenges.

Pakistan is extremely sensitive to the vulnerabilities of the small island developing States, whose small size, limited resources, geographic dispersion and isolation from markets place them at a disadvantage economically. They are vulnerable to global warming and rise in sea levels, with certain low-lying islands facing the increasing threat of the loss of their entire national territories. The frequency of natural disasters has caused major setbacks to the socio-economic development of the small islands. Pakistan was honoured to participate in the process of designing sustainable development plans and programmes tailored to the specific needs of the island States.

Pakistan is committed to making sustainable development a reality. We are fully cognizant of the fact that there is a great need to integrate economic and environmental priorities at the national level. Similarly, global efforts are required to address environmental and development issues in an integrated manner.

The efforts of the small island developing countries to sensitize the international community to their problems deserve our admiration. Despite their limited human resources at United Nations Headquarters, they have been able to garner the support of the international community for a Programme of Action that could be the first concrete step towards the implementation of the recommendations of Agenda 21 as they relate to the small islands.

The small island developing States require immediate action and attention. Even a day lost in launching the implementation of the Programme of Action would exact a heavy price, especially for those small islands whose very existence is threatened by the forces of nature. At the Barbados Conference the international community, through the adoption of the Programme of Action, recognized that the small island developing States face peculiar environmental and developmental problems.

The implementation of the Programme of Action will require additional financial commitments, both by national Governments and the international community. The expectation that such resources can be made available merely through a re-ordering of priorities is certainly not a realistic one. Most of the islands have small economies, with a great degree of built-in unpredictability, whether due to natural forces or to the structure of the economy. It is difficult to expect that such economies would be able to generate the extra resources without external financial assistance.

The adoption of the Programme of Action by the General Assembly will be another step towards the new global partnership and a reaffirmation by the international community of its responsibility to assist the small island developing States in their own endeavours to assure a secure and predictable lifestyle to their people.

To conclude, we hope that the Programme of Action will allow for the development of appropriate strategies by the small island developing States that will enable them to pursue their sustainable development goals despite their natural vulnerabilities. It also provides other developing countries with an identifiable framework within which South-South activities can be carried out. While South-South cooperation is an important mechanism for learning from the experiences of the developing countries, the concept of international responsibility as included in Agenda 21 must not be allowed to erode.

The developed countries have an important role to play in assisting the small island developing countries in the implementation of the Programme of Action. The follow-up process in the Commission for Sustainable Development will ensure the full participation of all countries in the implementation of the Programme of Action. We assure our friends from the small island developing States of our complete and full support to achieve the objectives of the Programme of Action and the Declaration of Barbados.

Mr. Isakov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): At the outset, on behalf of the Russian delegation, I wish to join in the expressions of sympathy on the tragedy suffered by the people and the Government of Egypt in the recent flooding.

The Barbados Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States marked an important step forward in the implementation of the decisions of the Rio de Janeiro Conference. In our view, the Programme of Action agreed upon in Barbados has practical significance for a purposeful solution to the problems of preserving the small islands' unique ecosystems and of stimulating their economic development. The Programme of Action's extensive measures in such areas as natural disaster prevention and preparedness, the safe removal of toxic and other wastes, the preservation of marine coastal and land resources, the

sustainable provision of clean drinking water, the diversification of sources of energy production and "disciplined" tourism, as we see it, are all intended to ensure a more economical and attentive attitude on the part of national Governments and the international community towards the integrated problems of island development.

One important area in which the island States can exploit their own efforts, coupled with international assistance, is the development of human potential in such areas as the preservation of culture, raising educational levels and the provision of housing and medical services.

Of special significance is the active use of modern scientific, technical and information potential capable of ensuring the expanded use of environmentally safe and inexpensive technologies, especially in the areas of agriculture, energy, public health and effective monitoring of the environment. In this connection, the Russian delegation notes its readiness to establish and develop cooperation with the small island States in those areas. The sustainable development interests of those States would be served by the applied use of my country's scientific research and practical experience in building a "small economy", preserving the diversity and uniqueness of the cultures of the indigenous peoples of Russia, developing coastal infrastructures and protecting the living resources of the sea.

I should like to express the hope that the implementation called for at the Barbados Conference of practical approaches and joint efforts for the survival and development of islands throughout the world's oceans and seas will be accompanied by the necessary political will and an awareness of common responsibilities for preserving the uniqueness of our planet.

Mr. Pursoo (Grenada): I should first like to join previous speakers in conveying condolences to the Government and the people of Egypt on the loss of life and property caused by the recent flood in that country.

Grenada associates itself with the statements made by the Chairman of the Group of 77; Ambassador Annette des Iles, Chairman of the Alliance of Small Island States; and the Minister of Tourism of Barbados, speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

In reaffirmation of the importance of Agenda 21 and in recognition of the special circumstances confronting the development of small island developing States, the United Nations convened the first ever Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, in Barbados from 25 April to 6 May 1994. It afforded small island developing States the opportunity to bring before the world community observations and studies of the specific characteristics which adversely affect their ability to achieve sustainable development. The Conference generated a global effort which produced a Programme of Action to address the areas of priority to sustainable island development. Grenada wishes to reiterate its deep appreciation to the organizers and participants of the Conference — in particular the United Nations and the host country, Barbados — and for the follow-up arrangements in progress, especially the SIDS/TAP and SIDS/NET initiatives undertaken by the United Nations Development Programme. We also wish to express appreciation to the Secretary-General for his reports and notes contained in documents A/49/425 and its addendum, A/49/414 and A/49/459.

There exist similar programmes of action, but such programmes in themselves are no guarantee of a solution to the problems they address. In this specific case, political will and financial means are the two most vital ingredients, without which the Global Conference's Programme of Action would most likely go the way of several of its predecessors — into oblivion. But the spirit of cooperation which was born in Rio at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in June 1992, and the overall realization of global interdependence in conjunction with the common but differentiated responsibility to secure the welfare of all constituencies of our planet, give reason for hope.

The successful implementation of the Programme of Action of the Barbados Conference holds out specific development benefits to small island developing States and indeed represents their hope. But failure successfully to implement this Programme of Action could lead to a void that could in turn entail setbacks and disruptions far beyond the shorelines of those islands. The problems of small island developing States are indeed a matter of global concern and therefore the solution to those problems must of necessity be in large measure global in scope.

The Programme of Action did not seek to address all the problems, development options and special needs of small island developing States. Instead, it addressed those that were deemed most critical, most essential and most feasible. It has been intentionally fashioned to lead to ease of implementation.

The disadvantages characteristic of the development of small island developing States are severe and numerous — the prospects and options are but few. The protection of our environment, the sustainable exploitation of our scant resources and the enhancement of our institutional and administrative capacities require at this time the forging of new and special partnerships.

Grenada wishes to express its appreciation to the donor countries, organizations and bodies within and outside the United Nations system that have responded to the special needs of small island developing States and have pledged continued support. Small island developing States have been made to understand that "aid fatigue" is wearing thin the resolve, and taxing the will, of traditional assistance processes.

We have been urged to be more creative in dealing with the constraints, challenges, prospects and options facing our countries. Small island developing states are truly appreciative of such encouragement, for we are cognizant that chronic dependency on aid can lead to an acquired immunity deficiency syndrome, to the detriment of the health of our economies. And so our economic development objectives are guided by the need to achieve self-sufficiency and genuine sustainability within the framework of global interdependence.

At the same time, the international economic environment of the 1990s stresses competition, a circumstance which increases the uncertainty of small island developing States; for global competition in the 1990s demands technological competence, and it is no secret that, among the several handicaps that adversely affect the economic development of small island developing States, the lack of technological capacity ranks high. Traditionally, small island developing States have acted responsibly in taking care of themselves, but globalization and technological developments have brought new challenges which require specific assistance merely to cope. Global cooperation to ensure the successful implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States remains a vital contribution to the hope of small island developing States.

The President: We have heard the last speaker on this item.

In accordance with the decision taken by the Assembly at its 30th plenary meeting, action on this sub-item will be taken in the Second Committee.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (e) of agenda item 89.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.